

Cards for Columnar Card Games

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to card packs and methods of playing Solitaire, Bridge and
5 other games involving arrangement of cards in columns.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

There is a need for a pack of cards to play games that involve displaying cards
arranged in at least one column where playing area is limited such as, for example, some
10 variations of Solitaire. Also, there is a need for a pack to play games that involves
displaying some cards in at least one column and displaying others in a fanned
arrangement such as, for example, Bridge.

Solitaire is a card game that is generally played by one individual and has many
variations. Some variations involve arranging cards in columns of cards that may
15 become inconveniently long. Some variations, for example, have columns of cards
containing cards with sequentially decreasing values and similar suits. When both the
value and suit of each card is displayed, these columns can become quite lengthy and
play can become difficult.

One such variation, by way of illustration, is Scorpion. Scorpion and many other
20 games of Solitaire are described in Alphonse Moyse, Jr.; "150 Ways to Play Solitaire",
Whitman Publishing Company, (1959), incorporated herein by reference. In Scorpion,
forty-nine cards of fifty-two are arranged in seven equal columns. The first three cards in
each of the first three of seven columns are placed face down. The remaining cards in the

columns are placed face up and vertically displaced to reveal value and suit indicia in a right-reading orientation. The three remaining of the fifty-two cards are placed face down in a pile for use when play is deadlocked. The goal of the game is to have all cards arranged into four columns, one for each suit, where the cards are consecutively arranged from the highest value to the lowest value and the Ace is the lowest.

Play then begins. First, one of the exposed cards at the bottom of the seven columns is selected. Then, a sequentially lower valued card of the same suit is found and placed on top of the exposed card together with all cards on top of found card in the column where the card was located. When a card that is face down is fully exposed, that card may be turned over. One of the three cards in the pile may be played on top of any fully exposed card at the bottom of a column when play is deadlocked. When a column is vacant, it may be filled by a King of a suit together with all cards that are on top of the King in the column where the King was located. Play continues until no cards may be moved or four columns are formed, each of a single suit, with values arranged in a sequentially lower fashion.

One problem commonly faced is the length of the columns. Columns can quickly grow to an awkwardly long length. Some players resort to arranging the long lengths in curves under the other columns. The curved cards sometimes become adversely mixed with other columns. Others start the columns at sufficient distance from where they are sitting to permit long columns in substantially vertical alignment. A larger playing field is ineffective when columns are excessively long and is even less effective for a player with limited range of arm extension or with vision impairment.

Bridge is a popular card game typically played by groups of four people in teams of two with partners sitting opposite each other. All cards are dealt and held by players in a fanned arrangement. Games can become quite competitive. Bridge competitions may involve many teams of four players.

5 Bridge has two phases, a bidding phase and a playing phase. During the bidding phase, the right to name a suit as trump or to not have any suit named as trump is won by the person from one team who declares that their team will win the most number of tricks. Tricks of each suit count differently. Tricks where no trump is declared count the most. The person who wins the bidding phase is called the Declarer and plays the cards
10 for their team.

At the end of the bidding phase, the partner of the Declarer, called the Dummy, displays the Dummy's hand in columns of similarly-suited cards of decreasing value. The display is in front of where the Dummy sits and oriented in a right-reading manner with respect to the Declarer. Column arrangement is predetermined by suit in a vertical
15 displacement that must be sufficient to permit the Declarer to see both the suit and value of each card during the playing phase that follows. Play during the subsequent playing phase can be made more difficult when at least one column is long enough to extend adversely into the playing field in a center portion of the table. Difficulty can be enhanced when smaller playing surfaces are used or when cards with enlarged indicia are
20 used.

During the playing phase, play is conducted at the center of the table. Each party plays one card to form a trick. A hand involves playing all cards to form 13 tricks. The winner of a particular trick is the party that plays the highest valued card in the suit that

was first played in that trick or the highest value of a trump suit if a trump suit is declared. When one party has no cards of the suit first played, that party may play a card of any other suit including the trump suit. One member of each team collects the tricks that the team wins during play of the hand until all cards are played. Tensions can mount
 5 when playing areas are compromised by the intrusion of long columns or when the cards in long columns are not clearly visible to the Declarer and mistakes are made.

Some of these problems are accentuated when playing a form of Bridge called Duplicate Bridge. In Duplicate Bridge, one hand is played more than once. A competing unit may be an individual, a pair or a team. Each competing unit attempts to play a hand
 10 better than all other units that play that same hand.

The area allowed for the Dummy hand in Duplicate Bridge is less than in other forms of Bridge. A board is used that remains in the center of each table during play. The board is oblong or square, slotted with four sections deep enough to hold a quarter of a pack of cards. The top of the board typically lists (1) a numbering to distinguish the
 15 board from other boards in play, (2) the dealer's position, and (3) vulnerability conditions. Also, regions along each edge of the table are reserved for placement of played cards from each hand in an orientation indicative of whether the team won or lost a particular trick.

During the playing phase, space limitations become most pronounced. Cards of
 20 the Dummy are placed in front on the Dummy as discussed before. However the height of the space is physically restricted because of the presence of the board. Excessively long columns require the portion furthest away from the Declarer to be closer to the region where played cards are placed. However, in Duplicate Bridge, the Declarer

announces what card is to be played from the Dummy hand and the partner of the Declarer then holds it and then places it with the other played cards of the Dummy's hand. This situation magnifies the problems discussed above of vision and emotional anxiety under competitive atmosphere.

5 A pack of cards, also called a deck of cards, is a group of a specific number of cards of consistent composition that are sold and used as a unit. Cards are designed with both similarities and differences. Some similarities are that each card has a long dimension and a short dimension, a face and a back, and indicia on the face that denote both value and suit in diagonal corners. In addition, cards in each suit generally have

10 Face Cards, Spot Cards and an Ace that can be either a Face Card or a Spot Card depending on the rules of the game played. Today's cards typically have values that consist of three Face Cards, Spot Cards and an Ace. Face Cards are associated with values of 13, 12 and 11, have indicia of K, Q and J, respectively, and are called King, Queen and Jack, respectively. Nine Spot Cards are associated with values of 10, 9, 8, 7,

15 6, 5, 4, 3, and 2 with indicia of the respective Arabic numerals. The Ace with indicia of "A" has a value of 14 if a Face Card or of 1 if a Spot Card. Suits generally are four in number and typically consist of two red suits called hearts and diamonds and two black suits called spades and clubs. Cards also have centrally-located indicia depicting value and suit in a collection or pictorial format.

20 Cards are typically double faced. When the card is positioned from the perspective of a viewer so the long dimension is vertical and the short dimension is horizontal, the face of the card has a primary diagonal extending from the upper left to the lower right and a secondary diagonal extending from the upper right to the lower left.

In this orientation, value indicia are positioned in the primary corners and suit indicia are positioned below the value indicia in the upper corner and above the value in the lower corner. Indicia in the upper half are right-reading and indicia in the lower half are upside-down-reading. Thus, when cards are oriented with the long dimension vertical
5 relative to the player holding the card, the player always can see the value and suit in the upper half of each card from a right-reading perspective and not an upside-down-reading perspective regardless of which short edge is on top.

Some differences relate to accommodations to characteristics of specific groups of players. Cards are generally designed for majority right-handed players and have the pair
10 of indicia in the upper-left and lower-right corners to permit viewing the character of several cards when held fanned out in a rightward manner. However, some cards are designed to include minority left-handed players and have the pairs of indicia in all four corners. Other cards are designed for players with limited vision and may use enlarged indicia.

15 The above cards do not address the problems described above. Columns in some forms of Solitaire can be so long that both suit and value indicia of all cards cannot be displayed conveniently. This problem is increased with use of smaller playing surfaces that are typical of hospital and rest home overbed tables, and fold-down trays on commercial aircraft. Long columns in Bridge may extend into the playing area at the
20 center portion of the table and interfere with the subsequent playing of tricks.

Alternatively, mistakes can occur because the value and suit of all cards within a long column may not be visible to the Declarer. These problems can be accentuated when playing areas are reduced in size. Larger playing surfaces may not be available or may

be unsuitable for players of limited arm extension or with visual impairment. In addition, fewer tables of this sort can fit into a room during competitions.

Several alternative arrangements of indicia showing value and suit have been described to the public. Some arrangements depict third suit indicia in the secondary
5 diagonal corners. These cards require a precision in the column arrangement that is difficult during normal playing of Bridge. Another arrangement depict third suit indicia midway between upper corners but are sized to equal the height of both of the vertically oriented value and suit indicia in the primary corners. Still another depict suit indicia midway between the upper corners and sized to approximate the vertical height of value
10 indicia but having an orientation that is upside-down from the suit indicia that is horizontally aligned with the value indicia. However, none of these arrangements satisfactorily address the problems stated above.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

15 I have invented a pack of cards that permits a more organized or, alternatively, a smaller playing surface in games involving arrangements of cards in columns, such as, for example, some games of Solitaire and the game of Bridge. Value and suit indicia on the cards of the pack are judicious placed to permit exposure of both suit and value indicia with both less columnar displacements of cards and less precise vertical alignment
20 in a columnar arrangement to than obtainable with a previously known pack of playing cards. Preferably the playing cards have a familiar appearance through use of a graphic to denote both value and suit of each card, wherein the graphic is centrally located on each face and wherein the graphic is a grouping if a Spot Card or a picture if a Face Card.

Benefits include an improvement in visibility and convenience of play and a reduction in the required playing area over that obtainable with a previously known pack of playing cards for the play of games involving columnar placement of at least some of the cards. Benefits also include a familiarity with the cards that is useful to encourage use of the cards by players.

The pack comprises a series of cards, each having a face and a back. The cards are organized typically into four suits with usually thirteen cards in each suit having one of 13 values. Each face has a top edge, a bottom edge, a left edge and a right edge. The faces on the cards have two diagonally opposing primary corners and two diagonally opposing secondary corners. The faces also have displayed on their surfaces both first indicia and second indicia in regions that border at least one edge, the second indicia having a height that is similar in length to or less than that of the first indicia. The first indicia denote a common characteristic throughout the series of cards of either a suit or a value and the second indicia denote the remaining characteristic throughout the series.

The first indicia are located in at least a first position and a second position on the faces of the cards in regions proximate the primary corners. The indicia in the first position are in the primary corner formed by the top edge and the left edge and have a right-reading orientation, and the indicia in the second position are in the primary corner formed by the bottom edge and the right edge and have an upside-down-reading orientation.

The second indicia are located in at least a first position and a second position on the faces of the cards. The second indicia in the first position have a right-reading orientation and are in a region bordering the top edge of the faces and extending to the

right of the right-reading first indicia but not within a region proximate to the secondary corner formed by the top edge and the right edge. The second indicia in the second position have an upside-down-reading orientation and are in a region bordering the bottom edge and extending to the left of the upside-down-reading first indicia but not
5 within a region proximate to the secondary corner formed by the bottom edge and the left edge.

In one embodiment, the second indicia are horizontally aligned with the first indicia in similar orientation and within a region between a point adjacent to the first indicia and a point about midway between primary and secondary corners.

10 In another embodiment, additional first indicia are located in third and fourth positions in secondary corners. The first indicia that are in secondary corners bordered by the top edge and the right edge have a right-reading orientation. Those in secondary corners bordered by the bottom edge and left edge have an upside-down-reading orientation. Second indicia are horizontally adjacent to each first indicium and have the
15 same orientation as the nearby first indicia.

In another embodiment, the characteristic of the first indicia is a value and the characteristic of the second indicia is a suit.

In another embodiment of the invention, additional second indicia are located in at least a third and fourth position. The second indicia in the third position are proximate
20 to and below the right-reading first indicia and have a right-reading orientation. The second indicia in the fourth position are proximate to and above the upside-down-reading first indicia and have an upside-down-reading orientation.

Still other embodiments exist. For example, the first indicia may be in secondary corners instead of primary corners or in both primary and secondary corners, and second indicia may be both horizontally adjacent to and vertically adjacent to first indicia in corners. In addition, the indicia may be enlarged over indicia typically depicted on cards.

5 I have also invented a method of using the invention. In games of cards, such as some forms of Solitaire, cards can now be displayed in columns having minimal length. One embodiment of the method includes three steps. The first step is of forming cards of the invention in vertically displaced columnar formation where both first indicia and second indicia are visible to a player. In this step the columns both occupy less vertical
10 displacement and require less precise vertical alignment when compared with cards previously known. The second step is of moving cards to reform columns having both less columnar length and less precise vertical alignment than obtainable with known packs of cards while allowing the player to view both first indicium and second indicium of each card. The third step is of manipulating cards toward a desired goal while using
15 less playing area when displaying both first and second indicia than could be used with previously known packs of playing cards.

In another embodiment of the method, card games can be played that involve both columnar and fanning arrangements. In games of cards, such as Bridge, cards can now be displayed in either a columnar arrangement having a minimal length or a fanned
20 arrangement. This method includes four steps. The first step is of forming of cards into four hands in a playing area with the playing card pack of the invention having second indicia that are both horizontally aligned and vertically aligned with all first indicia in orientations of the nearest first indicia wherein the area required for satisfactory playing

is less than that needed with cards previously known. The second step is of arranging the cards of one hand into a vertically displaced columnar formation where all cards of the same suit indicia are in one column and both the suit indicia and value indicia of each card is visible to all players. In this step the columns both occupy less vertical displacement and require less precise vertical alignment when compared with cards previously known. The third step is of arranging the cards of the remaining hands into a fanned arrangement that allows a player to view both the first indicium and the second indicium of each card while holding the cards in one hand. The fourth step is of playing cards to form a series of tricks until the winner of all tricks is known. The area required for satisfactory playing is less than that obtained with use of cards previously known.

As used herein, indicia mean characteristic marks used in place of words, e.g., “3”, “10”, “J” and “A” for “three”, “ten”, “Jack” and “Ace”, respectively.

The invention increases convenience of play because it is both effective and familiar. Convenience is increased because problems are minimized that are commonly associated with card games that involve columns of cards where both the suit and value of the cards are desirably visible to a player. Because the suit and value are on a horizontal line at the top of each card, the length of columns can be minimized. This is particularly advantageous for visually impaired players using a pack of cards with enlarged indicia. Also, some embodiments of the invention are familiar since indicia of similar shapes and designs can be still be used. Moreover, the fanning advantages of known packs of cards are retained with further inclusion of second indicia in positions vertically adjacent to first indicia.

In addition, convenience of play is increased because precise alignment of the vertical columns is not necessary and time is not unnecessarily consumed in attaining such precision. Alignment precision is decreased as the horizontally aligned second indicia approach the midpoints between primary and secondary corners. Alignment
5 precision is further decreased when first indicia are positioned in both primary and secondary corners and additional second indicia are used so one is horizontally adjacent to each primary indicium in a corner position.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

10 One or more advantages or preferred forms of the invention are described briefly in the accompanying drawings. The drawings are briefly described below.

FIG. 1 is an overhead or plan view showing the playing area during the Solitaire game Scorpion. 1A illustrates the view with cards of the invention while 1B (Prior Art) illustrate the view with typical cards that are previously known.

15 FIG. 2 is an overhead or plan view showing the playing area of the game of Duplicate Bridge near the beginning of the playing phase with one long column. 2A illustrates the view with cards of the invention while 2B (Prior Art) illustrate the view with typical cards that are previously known.

FIG. 3 is a face view of the three of spades, the Ace of spades, the King of spades
20 and the Queen of spades with value indicia in primary corners and the suit indicia horizontally displaced from the value indicia at a mid-point between corners.

Fig 4 is a face view of the three of spades, the Ace of spades, the King of spades and the Queen of spades with value indicia in primary corners and suit indicia horizontally aligned and proximate to the value indicia.

Fig 5 is a face view of the three of spades, the Ace of spades, the King of spades
5 and the Queen of spades with value indicia in primary corners, suit indicia horizontally aligned and proximate to the value indicia and suit indicia vertically aligned and proximate to each value indicia.

Fig 6 is a face view of the three of spades, the Ace of spades, the King of spades and the Queen of spades with value indicia in both primary and secondary corners, suit
10 indicia horizontally aligned and proximate to each value indicia and suit indicia vertically aligned and proximate to each value indicia.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Packs of playing cards have been used for many years. A pack of cards generally
15 comprises cards of the same physical dimensions with a back and a face. Typically, modern cards are organized into four suits with at least seven cards in each suit having one of seven different values. Various suit and value groupings are listed in "The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge", Henry Francis, Alan Truscott and Dorothy Francis eds., 5th Ed., American Contract Bridge League, Inc., at 318-319 (1994) which is
20 incorporated herein by reference. The back is generally a constant pattern used to denote the cards of a particular pack. Each face is a rectangle having a top edge, a bottom edge, a left edge and a right edge with the length of the top or bottom edges being less than the length of the left or right edges. The faces of the cards have two diagonally opposing

primary corners and two diagonally opposing secondary corners. The upper primary corner is bordered by the top edge and left edge and the lower primary corner is bordered by the bottom edge and the right edge. Similarly, the upper secondary corner is bordered by the top edge and the right edge and the lower secondary corner is bordered by the bottom edge and the left edge.

A particularly common pack of cards is titled Bridge, Poker Cards. The pack includes 52 cards grouped into four suits and 13 values within each suit. Each set of values is further grouped into Face Cards, Spot Cards and an Ace. Value indicia associated with 13, 12, and 11 are on Face Cards and indicated by the letter "K" for King, "Q" for Queen and "J" for Jack, respectively. Values associated with 10 through 2 are on Spot Cards and are indicated by numerals 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, and 2, respectively. An Ace is indicated by the letter "A" and can be either a Face Card with a value of 14 or a Spot Card with a value of 1 depending on the rules of the game played. Suits are four in number and consist of two red suits called hearts and diamonds, and two black suits called spades and clubs. First indicia indicate value and second indicia indicate suit. Optionally, an additional card or cards may be included without a suit or value indicia. Such card is called a Joker.

The cards generally contain centrally located a graphic image depicting both value and suit of a particular card. The graphic image on Face Cards is composed of a split picture. The upper half of the picture is the upper half of a figure in right-reading orientation representing a Jack, Queen or King in Victorian garb together with suit indicia placed an upper corner of the figure. The lower half of the figure is a similar image the top half but in an upside-down-reading orientation. The graphic image on Spot Cards is

composed of a collection of suit indicia in the number of the value indicia of the card. Generally the orientation is such that indicia in the upper half of the card are right reading and those in the lower half are upside-down reading. Single suit indicia for an Ace are right-reading.

5 First indicia are generally in the corners and have right-reading orientation when in upper corners and upside-down-reading orientation when in lower corners. This allows for a right-reading orientation to always be on top when cards have a short edge on top and are in either columnar or fanned arrangements. First indicia in primary corners facilitate rightward fanning that is comfortable for right-handed players. First
10 indicia in secondary corners facilitate leftward fanning that is comfortable for left-handed players. First indicia in all four corners accommodate comfort for both types of players.

Second indicia are generally below first indicia in upper corners and above first indicia in lower corners, and have the same orientation as their nearby first indicia. Some packs describe an additional set of second indicia positioned in secondary corners and
15 having heights greater than first indicia that are positioned in primary corners. Other packs describe secondary indicia positioned midway between primary and secondary corners in regions bordering upper or lower edges but with orientation opposite that of the first indicia that is in horizontal alignment. Still other packs of playing cards describe secondary indicia positioned at midpoint locations bordering either the upper or
20 lower edges but having heights as large as both the first indicia in primary corners and secondary indicia proximately below or above primary indicia.

Faces generally have a display on the face that symbolizes value and suit with a grouping or pictorial arrangement that generally includes suit indicia. The display is

often centrally located on the face but may extend to within upper of lower regions that run horizontally parallel to first indicia. Usually the displays are designed to look similar whether viewed in a right-reading position or an upside-down-reading position. Values of 1 or 14 generally are indicated by one large suit indicia. Values of from 2 to 10
5 generally are illustrated with a grouping of second indicia in the number associated with the value. Values of from 11, 12, and 13 generally are illustrated with pictorially with images associated with “Jack”, Queen” and “King”. Each grouping or pictorial arrangement is fashioned to appear similar from a right-reading position or an upside-down-reading position.

10 The above packs of playing cards do not deal effectively with a problem faced by players of games involving vertically displaced columns of cards. Players of such games can encounter difficulties associated with insufficient playing space, restricted arm extension or impaired vision. My invention minimizes the vertical length of columns in a manner that retains a sense of familiarity. As a result, less playing space is needed.
15 This is particularly useful for players having limited arm extension and visual impairment.

Familiarity is important. Since 1870, cards commonly are both double-headed, which permits them to be right-reading on top regardless of which narrow end is on top, and equipped with indicia in the corners that allow the player to identify the suit and
20 value of many cards at the same time when in a fanned arrangement. Until then, cards had to be held in only one orientation to be right-reading and the full face had to be seen to determine both suit and value. In addition, cards with larger indicia have had some acceptance to aid visually impaired players. However, either habit or superstition has

prevented any subsequent major changes in the face of playing cards. Unsuccessful attempts include, for example, attempts to cloth figures in modern clothes, to print each suit in a different color, to redesign suit indicia and to change the figures to represent more contemporary occupations or personalities.

5 My invention is a pack of playing cards where the second indicia have a height similar to or smaller than the first indicia. For purposes of this discussion only, first indicia are used to show value and second indicia denote suit. While this is preferable because it represents a common practice among packs of playing cards, my invention includes embodiments where first indicia denote the characteristic of suit and second
10 indicia denote the characteristic of value.

 The invention comprises a pack of cards having indicia that are judiciously placed to permit minimal displacement of cards to *expose both suit and value indicia in games of* cards involving columnar arrangement. This is done with less precise alignment than necessary with packs known to the public. First indicia are placed as described above in
15 conventional packs of playing cards in primary corners, secondary corners or both primary and secondary corners. Second indicia are placed in regions bounded on one edge by either the top edge or the bottom edge. The regions are horizontally aligned with the first indicia but do not extend into secondary corners. Second indicia within regions have orientations that are the same as the first indicia that are in horizontal alignment.

20 Centrally located graphics may be used. Familiarity is further enhanced when centrally located graphics are used to denote both value and suit of a particular card as described above for Face Cards and Spot Cards. When familiarity is not required of the

invention, any graphic that conveys value and suit is suitable. Alternatively, no graphic need be present.

Several variations are of particular interest. Preferably, the second indicia are within a horizontal region that extends from a position proximate to the first indicia to a point that is proximate a midpoint area between the upper corners and likewise between the lower corners. This arrangement permits more flexibility in formation of columns while minimizing column length. Familiarity is generally required for this variation. Alternatively, additional first indicia are placed as described above for known packs of cards in secondary corners and second indicia are horizontally adjacent to corner-
positioned first indicia to permit the most flexibility in formation of columns while minimizing column length. Familiarity is not required for this variation but is preferred. Additional second indicia may be placed vertically adjacent to each first indicium to facilitate fanning arrangements. The orientation of the second indicia is similar to the nearby first indicia. Also, first and second indicia may be enlarged over that of typical packs to enhance visibility.

The following figures show advantages and illustrate beneficial aspects of my invention.

Figure 1 shows an advantage offered by my invention over those previously known. Figure 1 is an overhead or plan view showing the Solitaire game Scorpion at a typical point during play. Figure 1A illustrates the overhead view (10) with cards of my invention of the type shown in Figure 6 while Figure 1B (Prior Art) illustrates the overhead view (a) with cards previously known. As shown, the overall length of a long column (12) is less in Figure 1A than a long column (b) in Figure 1B. Resulting play is

less unwieldy because both first indicia (14) and second indicia (16) in a magnified section of Figure 1A are visible in a column when vertical displacement is sufficient to reveal the first indicia. In contrast in a magnified section of Figure 1B, more of each card must be displayed for both first indicia (c) and second indicia (d) to be revealed. In addition, excessively long columns can still be curved while permitting view of both first and second indicia. This flexibility cannot occur if second indicia are positioned in secondary corners as is done with some known packs of playing cards.

In addition, the flexibility is enhanced as the second indicia that are horizontally aligned to the first indicia are positioned closer to the first indicia. When horizontally aligned second indicia are proximate to first indicia and first indicia are positioned in both primary and secondary corners, additional second indicia may be positioned horizontally adjacent to first indicia in secondary corners.

My invention also minimizes difficulties encountered in card games that use vertically displaced columns and also use fanning. Fanning is where all of the cards dealt to a player usually are held in one hand in a fanned arrangement that permits viewing of one corner of each card. When that corner also contains both first indicia and second indicia in vertical alignment, the player views the entire hand with minimal difficulty. An embodiment of my invention further includes additional second indicia vertically adjacent to first indicia that are in corners to permit fanning.

Bridge is an example of a game that uses both columns and fanning arrangements. All cards are dealt to four players. During the play phase a Declarer and the two players on the opposing team hold their cards in a fanned arrangement in one hand and select a card to play with the other. The cards of the Declarer's teammate, called the Dummy, are

placed in columns of similar suit with descending value. Shorter columns reduce arm extension required of Declarer to play cards from Dummy hand.

My invention is particularly useful for playing a variation of Bridge called Duplicate Bridge. In Duplicate Bridge a board occupies the center area of playing tables and restricts space for the Dummy hand. In addition, space is further restricted by the practice of each player placing played cards in front of each player.

During the Duplicate Bridge playing phase, space limitations become most pronounced. Cards of the Dummy are placed in front on the Dummy as discussed before. However the height of the space is physically restricted because of the presence of the board and a restricted area for played cards. Excessively long columns require the portion furthest away from the Declarer to be near the region reserved for played cards. However, in Duplicate Bridge, the Declarer calls out the card to be played from the Dummy hand and the Dummy holds the card until play is completed and then places the card on the table with other played cards in front of where the Dummy sits. This accentuates the problems discussed above of vision and emotional anxiety under competitive atmosphere. The problems are magnified in Duplicate Bridge because of restrictions on space.

Figure 2 shows advantages offered by my invention over those previously known when playing Duplicate Bridge. Figure 2A illustrates an overhead view with cards of my invention while Figure 2B (Prior Art) illustrates an overhead view with cards previously known. In Figure 2A is shown an overhead or plan view of a Duplicate Bridge table at the beginning of the playing phase where a Dummy hand (22) is displayed that contains one particularly long column (24). Particularly long columns in Bridge typically

number from over 5 to over 8 cards. The place for the dummy hand is further restricted by a board (26) at the center of the table and space (28) in front of each player that is reserved for placement by each player of cards played. Cards are placed vertically when a team wins the trick and horizontally when the team loses. In Figure 2B is shown similar features with cards previously known, i.e., an overhead view of the table (e), a Dummy hand (f), one particularly long column of cards (g), a board (h), and a space (i) in front of each player reserved for played cards. As shown, the long column (24) extends less for Figure 2A than the long column (g) for Figure 2B because both indicia are viewable with less vertical displacement.

As seen, my invention is beneficial in easing tensions and efficiently minimizing problems. Play is less tense because Declarer is more easily able to see the cards of the Dummy hand in Figure 2A than in Figure 2B. Also, cards in the long column can be more easily displayed in the restricted area commonly found in Duplicate Bridge because less column length is required to show both suit and value of all cards. Shorter column height allows long columns to be placed closer to the Declarer. This reduces eye strain. Also, the columns need to be less vertically precise over columns formed by other cards known to the public. This permits faster display of Dummy hands and can further reduce player tension. Alternatively, smaller tables could be used, an advantage in Bridge competition events where many players participate. Shorter columns permit less arm extension

My invention also permits packs with larger indicia for visually impaired players. Columns of cards with enlarged indicia are even longer than those of standard-sized

indicia. All of the issues discussed above are magnified and become more of a problem. My invention minimizes those problems.

Figure 3 and Figure 4 show illustrations of embodiments of the invention that are advantageous for card games involving use of vertically displaced columns. Figure 3 is a face view of the three of spades, the Ace of spades, the King of spades and the Queen of spades for one embodiment of the invention. As seen, first indicia (30) are in primary corners (32) and second indicia (34) are horizontally displaced from the first indicia (30) at a mid-point between corners. Height of second indicia (34) is similar to that of first indicia (30). Thus, vertical displacement of the cards in the column to permit viewing of both first and second indicia is minimized. Mid-point placement permits less precision in the vertical alignment of the columns than that required by some known packs while allowing Declarer to view both the first and second indicia of each card. Familiarity is enhanced by use of centrally located graphics (35). A column alignment that requires less precision is easier to achieve, particularly when columns are unusually long. A need for less precision also can result in less tension among players in a competitive game atmosphere.

Figure 4 is a face view of the three of spades, the Ace of spades, the King of spades and the Queen of spades for another embodiment of the invention. As seen, first indicia (40) are in primary corners (42) and second indicia (44) are horizontally aligned and proximate to the value indicia. Proximate placement permits a need for even less precision in the vertical alignment of columns than allowed with the embodiment shown in Figure 3. Familiarity is enhanced by use of centrally located graphics (45).

Figure 5 and Figure 6 show illustrations of embodiments of the invention that are advantageous for card games involving both use of vertically displaced columns and fanning arrangements. Figure 5 is a face view of the three of spades, the Ace of spades, the King of spades and the Queen of spades for yet another embodiment of the invention.

5 As seen, first indicia (50) are in primary corners (52) and second indicia (54) are horizontally aligned and proximate to first indicia (50). Additional second indicia (56) are vertically aligned and proximate to the first indicia (50). Familiarity is enhanced by use of centrally located graphics (55). This embodiment allows for conventional fanning arrangements while not sacrificing advantages in columnar placement that have been
10 discussed above. Minimal fanned displacement of conventional fanning arrangements permits more control of the cards during play. This control minimizes a chance of cards inadvertently and disadvantageously falling from a hand onto a playing surface for others to see.

Figure 6 is a face view of the three of spades, the Ace of spades, the King of
15 spades and the Queen of spades for still another embodiment of the invention. As seen, first indicia (60) are in primary corners (62) and second indicia (64) are horizontally aligned and proximate to first indicia (60). Additional second indicia (66) are vertically aligned and proximate to first indicia (60). Also, first indicia (60) are in secondary corners (68) with second indicia similarly aligned both horizontally (64) and vertically
20 (66). Familiarity is enhanced by use of centrally located graphics (65). This embodiment allows for conventional fanning arrangements that accommodate both right-handed players and left-handed players while not sacrificing advantages in columnar placement that have been discussed above. This embodiment also permits the least precise vertical

alignment in columns with minimal column length while allowing complete visibility of both first and second indicia of all cards.

Packs of cards of the invention can be made by any manufacturing techniques and methods known to or practiced by the playing card industry. Typically, packs of cards
5 are made from pasteboard stock although some are made from plastic sheets or other materials. Paste board stock is formed by adhering two thin sheets of paper with a layer of black paste. The black paste makes the final card properly opaque, even when a lamp is behind the player. One or two full packs of cards are then printed at one time onto large sheets of pasteboard. Cards, typically about 2.5 inches by about 3.5 inches (63
10 millimeters (mm) by 89 mm), are then individually die cut at speeds in excess of 35,000 cards per hour. The height of standard indicia are typically 0.5 inches (13mm) for corner value indicia and 0.3 inches (8mm) for suit indicia that are either below or above the corner value indicia. The height of enlarged indicia are typically 0.75 inches (19mm) for corner value indicia and 0.5 inches (13mm) for suit indicia that are either below or above
15 the corner value indicia. Simultaneously, the edges of the cards are pressed into knife-edges to facilitate shuffling and retard edge fraying. Modern refinements in manufacturing equipment are typically held as trade secrets.